

Bucknell Men Now 5-0 After 69-52 Win over West Alabama **Niagara Subregional MVP Mike Muscala Leads Bison with 14 Points**

[box score](#)

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. - Mike Muscala scored 14 points and Bucknell broke open a close game with a 19-0 run surrounding halftime in a 69-52 victory over West Alabama on Sunday afternoon at the Gallagher Center. The victory sent the Bison to a 5-0 start for the first time since 2005-06, with four of those victories coming over Purdue, Niagara, New Mexico State and West Alabama at the 2K Sports Classic benefitting Wounded Warrior Project.

Sunday's performance gave Bucknell three wins in three days at an in-season tournament for the second year in a row. The Bison matched Alabama with 4-0 records at this year's 2K Sports Classic.

Muscala was named MVP of the Niagara Subregional of the 2K Sports Classic after three big performances. He had 18 points, 16 rebounds and seven assists in the win over Niagara, followed by 24 points and nine boards against New Mexico State. On Sunday he was needed for only 20 minutes, but still made 5 of 7 shots and logged 14 points, five rebounds and two blocks.

Bryson Johnson and Cameron Ayers tallied 11 points each, and Johnson earned a spot on the All-Tournament Team.

Backed by a school-record 17 3-pointers, Bucknell ran away from West Alabama 87-50 at Sojka Pavilion last season, but the circumstances were far different this time around. The Bison were coming off a pair of physical battles with Niagara and New Mexico State, while the much-improved Tigers were well-rested not having played since Wednesday. West Alabama also featured a revamped roster that included a couple of talented big men, led by 6-10 center Jack Hill who came in averaging a double-double.

The Tigers hung around for most of the first half thanks to some hot 3-point shooting from DeMarco Spears. The Bison shot 54.5 percent in the opening half, but a handful of missed layups contributed to a 7:12 field-goal drought. During that time West Alabama shaved a 12-point deficit down to four, as Spears canned a pair of treys to pull UWA within 24-20.

Joe Willman ended the Bison dry spell with an elbow jumper, and that ignited a 14-4 run over the final 4:34 of the half. Dom Hoffman scored on a putback, Ayers hit back-to-back jumpers and Brian Fitzpatrick drove the lane for a one-handed jam with 14 seconds remaining.

After scoring the last eight points of the first half, the Bison came out of the locker room and poured in the first 11 of the second stanza. Muscala scored seven straight points in just 63 seconds, coming on a 3-point play, a transition dunk off a pretty feed from Willman and a pair of free throws. Willman's baseline jumper capped the 19-0 run and gave Bucknell a 49-24 lead with 15:50 to play.

The Bison cleared the bench with about 12 minutes to go and led by as many as 30 points on a couple of occasions. The game got a bit ragged at the end and Bucknell did not score in the last 3:30, but the game was well out of reach by that point.

All 15 players saw action in the game, and no Bison played more than 25 minutes.

Fitzpatrick led the reserve unit with eight points in 10 minutes. The Bison shot 46.2 percent from the floor and went 4-for-11 from 3-point distance. West Alabama shot 33.9 percent, including a 7-for-19 showing from the arc.

Bucknell will get a well-deserved break before returning to action on Nov. 23 at Penn State at 4:30 p.m. The Bison will be shooting for their first 6-0 start since 1983-84.

